World History Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**“The Historical Development of the Crusades”**

**Directions: Read and briefly ANNOTATE the passage and CIRCLE PEOPLE/EVENTS you want to know more about or seem important. As you read, ask yourself ‘what was the background of the Crusades’? Then, answer the question(s) on the back.**

The origins of the crusades lie in Western developments earlier in the Middle Ages, as well as the deteriorating situation of the Byzantine Empire. The breakdown of the Carolingian Empire in the later 9th century, combined with the relative stabilization of local European borders after the Christianization of the Vikings, Slavs, and Magyars, meant that there was an entire class of warriors who now had very little to do but fight among themselves and terrorize the peasant population. The Church tried to stem this violence with the Peace and Truce of God movements, forbidding violence against certain people at certain times of the year. This was somewhat successful, but trained warriors always sought an outlet for their violence. A plea for help from the Byzantine Emperor Alexius I in opposing Muslim attacks thus fell on ready ears.

One later outlet was the Reconquista in Spain, which at times occupied Spanish knights and some mercenaries from elsewhere in Europe in the fight against the Islamic Moors. In 1063, Pope Alexander II had given papal blessing to Spanish Christians in their wars against the Muslims, granting both a papal standard (the vexillum sancti Petri) and an indulgence to those who were killed in battle.

This background in the Christian West must be matched with that in the Muslim East. Muslim presence in the Holy Land goes back to the initial Arab conquest of Palestine in the 7th century. This did not interfere much with pilgrimage to Christian holy sites or the security of monasteries and Christian communities in the Holy Land of Christendom, and western Europeans were not much concerned with the loss of far-away Jerusalem when, in the ensuing decades and centuries, they were themselves faced with invasions by Muslims and other hostile non-Christians such as the Vikings and Magyars. However, the Muslim armies' successes were putting strong pressure on the Eastern Orthodox Byzantine Empire.

A turning point in western attitudes towards the east came in the year 1009, when the Fatimid caliph of Cairo, al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah, had the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem destroyed. His successor permitted the Byzantine Empire to rebuild it under stringent circumstances, and pilgrimage was again permitted, but many stories began to be circulated in the West about the cruelty of Muslims toward Christian pilgrims; these rumors then played an important role in the development of the crusades later in the century.

**Source:**

"The Christian Broadcasting Network." *Overview of the Crusades*. N.p., n.d. Web. 03 Feb. 2015. <http://www.cbn.com/spirituallife/ChurchAndMinistry/ChurchHistory/Crusades\_Wikipedia.aspx>.

1) Summarize what you learned about the background of the Crusades.

2) Do you think this source is objective in its telling of history? Why/why not?